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C.I.A. and F.B.I. Accused in the J.F.K. Inquiries

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities has accused both the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation of failing to fulfill their obligations in the investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. In non-legal terms, the agencies were said to have held back pertinent information either to protect their images or for reasons unknown.

The committee accused the C.I.A. leadership of suppressing, at the time, possible connections between its own attempts to kill Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro and the murder of President Kennedy; Allen Dulles, director of Central Intelligence until 1961 and a member of the Warren Commission, never told the commission about the plots against Dr. Castro. Other C.I.A. officials failed to disclose the agency's sponsorship of a Cuban agent, close to Dr. Castro, in an anti-Castro plot from 1961 to 1965, or to question the agent about the Kennedy assassination.

The committee accused the F.B.I. of failure to follow leads on the possible involvement in the assassination of persons other than Lee Harvey Oswald, apparently out of bureau officials' fear of injuring the bureau's image of efficiency. Neither the C.I.A. nor the F.B.I., for example, followed up on a tip involving a Cuban-American who left Texas for Cuba via Mexico the day after the murder and was described by an informant as "involved in the assassination."

Nor, the committee report said, did the C.I.A. follow up a lead concerning an unidentified passenger who flew to Cuba from Mexico City on a Cuban airliner nine days after the assassination. The C.I.A. had information at the time that the flight was delayed to wait for the passenger, who did not pass through Mexican customs. The passenger rode in the plane's cockpit.

This is not the first time the committee has raised the issue of C.I.A. concealment of facts from the Warren Commission. Richard Helms, then deputy director, told the committee last year that he did not mention the plots because the "precise question" was not asked.

The agency's chiefs apparently did tell someone. Howard K. Smith, an ABC news commentator, reported last week that President Lyndon B. Johnson, during his term in office, had told him that "Kennedy was trying to get Castro, but Castro got to him first." What Mr. Kennedy's successor was told, and when, is unknown.

On the strength of the committee's report, several Senators have called for yet another investigation of the Kennedy assassination. None of the previous five Government investigations of the assassination had produced any evidence that anyone other than Lee Harvey Oswald was involved in the crime. A sixth investigation would have to contend with the fact that many of the possible witnesses, including high intelligence officials, are now dead.